

[Zenobia Brown's Story]

[?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER Ellis William

ADDRESS 852 St. Nicholas Ave. New York

DATE Sept. 13, 1938

SUBJECT FOLKLORE

1. Date and time of interview

2. Place of interview

3. Name and address of informant

Zenobia Brown 415 W. 146th St. New York, N. Y.

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Library of Congress

Miss Brown occupied three rooms at the above address which was very artistically furnished. Books and magazines neatly placed in racks was indicative of her being meticulous. Things in place good housekeeper.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Ellis Williams

ADDRESS 852 St. Nicholas Ave. New York

DATE Sept. 13, 1938

SUBJECT ZENOBIA BROWN'S STORY

In a little hamlet outside of Wilmington, North Carolina, about twenty years ago I had an experience which I hope shall never be mine again and which will remain with me to the end of time.

It concerned my stepfather, a man of about fifty five, and who was up to that time an extraordinarily heavy drinker who denied himself of many comforts in order that his rapacious greed for drink could be satisfied.

My mother, a woman then of about fifty, was a very kindly and devout soul whose mature years were spent in the varied activities of the church and home where she laboured unceasingly to keep body and soul together. Oft-times I would see her on her bended knees praying for my dad to do right and change his bad ways. She would talk to him

Library of Congress

continuously but her preachments always went unheeded. In her every talk she would warn that the devil would get him if he continued, but he always dismissed her lightly with a wave of the hand.

It was on a Sunday morning that Martin started on one of his sprees, running it well into the night. He arrived home around midnight in an almost helpless condition and had to be put to bed. He was hardly in bed more than an hour when my mother attracted 2 by an unusual noise in the room proceeded to investigate the sounds which sounded like a combination of grumbling and moaning.

As we entered the room we found Martin crawling on his all fours groaning and moaning with the bed covers around him and going towards a locked door that led to the porch that opened upon a running brook. As we endeavoured to get him back in bed we beheld out of nowhere a huge animal with a dog-like appearance and with eyes the size of saucers standing inside the door. We stood petrified as Martin crawled twice towards the object still moaning and groaning. The third time he started towards the object my mother screamed and grabbed him by the foot. Her action seemed to have broken the spell and the object disappeared. The screams brought neighbours to the house who assisted in putting him back in bed.

From that instant Martin was very sick and remained in bed until he died. He was never able to recall the incident. Were it not true that my mother witnessed the happenings, and discussed it with me over a period of years, I would have sworn it was an optical illusion.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM D Extra Comment

STATE New York

Library of Congress

NAME OF WORKER Ellis William

ADDRESS 852 St. Nicholas Ave.

DATE Sept. 13, 1938

SUBJECT ZENOBIA BROWN'S STORY

Zenobia Brown a woman of about thirty-eight or forty was very reluctant to tell her story at the out set for fear that it would be published locally. Her reluctance was due she claimed to numerous investigations by the Home Relief Bureau, W. P. A. Housing Administration, and by Employment surveys sponsored by the U. S. Dept of Interior. On being assured that she would not receive unfavourable publicity, she related her story so convincingly that the interviewer had little doubt of the truth of the story.